

U.S. Agricultural Research Service in Cooperative Agreement with UT

TOLEDO, OH - Marcy Kaptur spent Monday promoting a growth industry in the area-a literal growth industry.

Congresswoman Kaptur said she is spearheading a comprehensive effort to help grow the area's \$100 million annual greenhouse industry with the goal of making Toledo a national center for research. She was joined at the announcement, held at Toledo Botanical Garden, by University of Toledo President Dan Johnson along with local greenhouse owners and representatives of the Agricultural Research Service, the premier scientific agency within the US Department of Agriculture responsible for solving agricultural problems of national importance.

"Our area is known for manufacturing, but the greenhouse industry in Northern Ohio creates and sustains more than 750 jobs-and most of them are in family-owned small businesses," said Congresswoman Kaptur, who serves as the ranking Democratic member on the U.S. House agriculture appropriations subcommittee. "Some people believe that we can only import businesses from other areas. I believe that we can and should build on our literally home-grown businesses that have been our historic strength."

"These small businesses create a unique environment - literally a city in a 'glasshouse garden'. More than half of them have been in business for at least 40 years. They face increasing global competition," she said. "We want to help them grow their businesses and create even more jobs. That's why we're here today-to bring together the university, the federal government, and the private sector-to address the growers' needs and meet the challenges that can endanger their growth in the coming years."

"Today I wish to announce that more than \$6 million in federal funds are dedicated to the ARS-UT Cooperative Agreement on Greenhouse Production Research," said Congresswoman Kaptur, "and I want to thank the University of Toledo for devoting its own resources to help make this project possible." As the effort ramps up, UT and ARS are bringing nationally recognized researchers and technical staff to Toledo, creating the largest federal research presence ever in Northwest Ohio, to assist growers in improving their

quality of product and industry profitability.Â Research projects currently underway address such concerns as advanced genetics to help plants tolerate cold weather, improved disease management, enhanced growing media, growth regulation,Â new energy systems, water management and theÂ development of 21st century products from greenhouses, like neutraceuticals.Â The UT and ARS research teams are taking advantage of greenhouse space on the university campus as well as existing and under-construction space at the Toledo Botanical Garden.

“The synergy between our university researchers and the ARS researchers is exciting,” said President Johnson.Â “In collaboration with multiple intermediary organizations, including The Ohio State University, the Extension Service, the Northwest Ohio Flower and Vegetable Growers Association and the Center for Innovative Food Technology, we should see Northwest Ohio grow into the research and technology transfer center of the nation for the greenhouse industry.”

Congresswoman Kaptur said the UT-ARS cooperative agreement, the only such agreement in the region, provides a starting point to assist a historical and economically important sector of our local economy.Â

Additionally, Congresswoman Kaptur also reported that the USDA Agricultural Research Service is consideringÂ constructing a new facility to support this project.Â The current estimate is that it would provideÂ 21,000 gross square feet of laboratories, offices and meeting rooms and an attached headhouse/greenhouse of 10,000 gross square feet.Â This would support an expanded program of seven scientists and associated support staff.Â This would not include space for University of Toledo faculty.Â AnnualÂ support funding for such a program is estimated at \$2.7 million.Â Total project cost is estimated at \$17 million.Â If space for UT faculty were included, a 40,000 gross square feet facility would be needed, with a total project cost of \$21.3 million.Â “This facility may be several years away, but its considerationÂ demonstrates how important this research activity can be, and how much more it can provide to spur growth in our region,” said Kaptur.

“We are well on our way to quantifying the role of the greenhouse industry in Northern Ohio, understanding the challenges it faces, and crafting strategies to enhance the industry.Â This is an ongoing process and we welcome input and collaboration as we move forward.”

FACT SHEET

- Greenhouse and nursery production is projected to be the third most valuable sector of the agricultural industry in Ohio, trailing only corn and soybeans.
- Lucas County ranks fourth in the state of Ohio and 94th nationally in terms of the dollar value of nursery and greenhouse crops sold.Â Lucas County is in the top 4% of counties nationally in nursery and greenhouse crop sales.
- Ohio's floriculture industry is valued at more than \$200 million (fifth in the U.S. in 1997).
- Eighty five million U.S. households spent \$39.6 billion at lawn and garden retail outlets in 2002, according to the National Gardening Association.
- The wholesale value of bedding and garden plants totals \$2.42 billion nationally, with California, Michigan, Texas, Ohio and Florida the top five states.Â
- Potted geraniums sold for the highest value to growers (\$150 million), followed by pansy and viola plants (\$118 million).

For more information about Northwest Ohio's greenhouse industry, please visit these Web sites:Â

www.loc.gov/bicentennial

www.glasshouseflowers.com/